

Appl. No. 09/494,540
Reply Dated 08/15/2005
Reply to Final Office Action of 05/18/2005

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 8 and 21 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 7, 9, 20, 22, and 31-32 as follows below.

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

MARKED UP VERSION OF CLAIMS

1-6 (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) Apparatus for formation of a composite video image, the apparatus comprising:

a shadow control module that receives a foreground video image signal and generates a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

a shadow generation module that receives the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generates and issues a foreground shadow signal FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

a shadowing module that receives the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal BG and generates a modified background image signal, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each selected pixel of the background image, wherein said shadowing module forms a sum signal $\beta \cdot \text{FGSh} + (1 - \beta) \cdot \text{BG}$, as said modified background image signal, where β and β' are real

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numbers lying in a range $[0,1]$, selected so as to limit either an intensity of the foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image, wherein β is less than β' thereby limiting the intensity of the background image.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) An [[The]] apparatus of claim 8, for formation of a composite video image, the apparatus comprising:

a shadow control module that receives a foreground video image signal and generates a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

a shadow generation module that receives the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generates and issues a foreground shadow signal FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

a shadowing module that receives the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal BG and generates a modified background image signal, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each selected pixel of the background image, wherein said shadowing module forms a sum signal $\beta \cdot \text{FGSh} + (1 - \beta') \cdot \text{BG}$, as said modified background image signal, where β and β' are real numbers lying in a range $[0,1]$, selected so as to limit either an intensity of the foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image, wherein β is greater than β' thereby limiting the intensity of the foreground shadow.

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10-19 (Canceled)

20. (Currently amended) A method for formation of a composite video image, the method comprising:

receiving a foreground video image signal and generating a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

receiving the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generating and issuing a foreground shadow signal, FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

receiving the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal BG and generating a modified background image signal, MBC, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each selected pixel of the background image by forming a sum signal, $B \cdot \text{FGSh} + (1 - B') \cdot \text{BG}$, as a modified background image signal, where B and B' are real numbers lying in a range $[0,1]$, selected so as to limit either an intensity of the foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image, wherein B is less than B' thereby limiting the intensity of the background image.

21. (Cancelled).

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22. (Currently amended) A [[The]] method of claim 21, for formation of a composite video image, the method comprising:

receiving a foreground video image signal and generating a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

receiving the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generating and issuing a foreground shadow signal, FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

receiving the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal BG and generating a modified background image signal, MBG, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each selected pixel of the background image by forming a sum signal, $\beta \cdot \text{FGSh} + (1 - \beta') \cdot \text{BG}$, as a modified background image signal, where β and β' are real numbers lying in a range [0,1], selected so as to limit either an intensity of the foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image, wherein β is greater than β' thereby limiting the intensity of the foreground shadow signal.

23-30 (Canceled)

31. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable code means embodied therein for producing a composite video image including portions of at least one foreground image and of at least one background image;

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computer readable program code means for receiving a foreground video image signal FG and generates a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

computer readable program code means for receiving the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generating and issues a foreground shadow signal FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

computer readable program code means for receiving the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal BG and generating a modified background image signal, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each selected pixel of the background image by forming a sum signal $\beta \cdot \text{FGSh} + (1 - \beta') \cdot \text{BG}$ as said modified background image signal, where β and β' are selected real numbers lying in a range $[0,1]$, selected so as to limit either an intensity of the foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image, wherein β is greater than β' thereby limiting the intensity of the foreground shadow.

32. (Currently Amended) An ~~[[The]]~~ article of claim 31, manufacture comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable code means embodied therein for producing a composite video image including portions of at least one foreground image and of at least one background image;

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computer readable program code means for receiving a foreground video image signal FG and generates a shadow key that identifies at least one selected pixel for which foreground shadowing is activated;

computer readable program code means for receiving the foreground image signal and the shadow key and generating and issues a foreground shadow signal FGSh, in which each selected pixel appears in a shadow format; and

computer readable program code means for receiving the foreground shadow signal and a background video image signal BG and generating a modified background image signal, in which a foreground shadow is impressed on each selected pixel of the background image by forming a sum signal $B \cdot FGSh + (1 - B') \cdot BG$ as said modified background image signal, where B and B' are selected real numbers lying in a range $[0,1]$, selected so as to limit either an intensity of the foreground shadow or an intensity of the background image, wherein B is less than B' thereby limiting the intensity of the background image signal.